

4. C's Fasting Experience

() George Copway, pp. 38-39.
Life and Travels of Kah ge ga bowh , pp- 38-39

Dreams, too, were much relied on by our nation. They thought the spirits revealed to them what they were to do, and what they should be, viz., good hunters, warriors, and medicine men. I would fast sometimes two, and sometimes even four days. When fasting, we were to leave the wigwam early in the morning, and travel all day from one place to another, in search of the favour of the gods. I was taught to believe that the gods would communicate with me, in the shapes of birds, animals, etc. When I fell asleep in the woods, and dreamed some strange dream, I felt confident that it was from the spirits. I will now relate what I dreamed when I was but twelve years old, and also my father's interpretation of my dream.

Myself and others were sleeping far from the wigwam, near a large pine. I saw, in my dream, a person coming from the east. He approached, walking on the air; he looked down upon me and said, "Is this where you are?" I said, "Yes." "Do you see this pine?" "Yes, I see it." "It is a great and high tree." I observed that the tree was lofty, reaching towards the heavens - its branches

Willie Jack was a Washoe Indian born on the Walker River Indian Reservation in South western Nevada 1903. Unlike the Piutes in northern Nevada the Washoes are an inferior type and were found by the first white explorers living on insects, grubs and small game such as squirrels, rats, and field mice. This was due very likely to having been driven to these barren lands by their stronger foes, the shoshones and piutes, after defeat in wars. At any rate they are herded on small reservations. since there is no other place for an Indian to go and are considered by the whites the laziest good for nothing riff raff in the country with the exception of course of Communists. The buffalo and other forms of American wild life are well preserved and taken care of. However Indians are human beings so their welfare doesn't matter. Willie Jack therefore grew up in an environment of sloth and indolence and poverty. Many of the Washoes are inbred and the \$50.00 a year allocated to each Indian from the sale of Pine nuts enables them to live on a scale quite lower than that of the best people. So when Willie Jack became 13 years of age he did not know how to read or write and the constitution was as foreign to him as it is to an American police chief.

He knew that money was a very desirable commodity. But there was none of it obtainable. A Mexican acquaintance of his was very much in love with another man's wife. Not having the courage to do so himself he wished to have her husband killed so that there would be no barriers in the way of his illicit relationship. So he offered Willie Jack 75 cents if he would kill his rival. To Willie Jack 75 cents was an enormous sum. Therefore he agreed to the plan with the vision of the great wealth soon to be his. His friend gave him a rifle and stationed him behind a tree near his rival's house. He himself stood some distance away and they waited for this man to emerge from his shack.

In a short time the door opened. It was evening and Willie was unable to see that the figure emerging was that of a woman. So he lifted his rifle and shot, there was a scream and the woman fell dead shot through the temple. His friend disappeared and was seen no more. Willie fled and hid in his family's home on the reservation. He has been with the gun and was soon arrested. Had it not been for his youth Willie would have been gassed in the lethal gas chamber at the State Prison. But the court have been lenient and gave him a life sentence, which at 13 years of age he began to serve. So in 1916 Willie Jack traded the confinement of the reservation for that of the State Prison. And there was one less Indian at large to trouble the public conscience. Here there were a great number of other Indians. There was no work of any kind to do and life became as automatic as before. Someone gave him an old phonograph with a brass horn and cylindrical records. He played this all day long day after day. Sometimes he attempted to work making beaded bags and various kinds of bridles and harness which the other prisoners made and which were sold in the curio shop. But he could never acquire the skill of the others and so gave it up. He dozed in the hot sun and played his phonograph.

In 1918 Dan Riley, a negro, came to the prison. He had a good education and becoming friendly with Willie Jack took an interest in him and determined to teach him to read and write. Willie Jack was interested in this idea and they set to work. In two years Willie Jack could read the pulp magazines and write letters to his friends outside. In five years Dan Riley had accomplished more than the Indian school had been able to do in 13. The years fled by. Twice a year the parole board met and twice a year Willie Jack's application for parole was turned down. Had he been a white man he would have been paroled after serving 7 years. But he was an Indian and the only good Indians are dead Indians. Therefore it was 14 years before the prison gates opened and he left on parole. He was 27 years old. He left with the old brass phonograph under his arm. There were tears in his eyes. Back to the reservation.

Had Bill been a white man it would have ended there. But Bill was an Indian. So the Reno Gazette and the Nevada State Journal published at the miscarriage of justice. The district attorney of Reno read the editorials and saw his chance of adding another feather to his cap. So he issued a warrant for Bill and this time Bill found himself charged with violating the State Narcotic Laws. And the Superior court judge had no scruples about frameups especially where they concerned Indians. So he instructed the jury and Bill was found guilty on the same evidence and with the same witnesses which were used in his trial in the Federal Court, which found him not guilty. He was given a sentence of 8 years in the Nevada State Prison.

In prison he was put in charge of the garage. He did all the repairing of all the cars and of all brought in by friends by the warden. He appealed to the Supreme Court in vain. He was only an Indian, he appealed to Governor Baizer in vain. Public opinion in Nevada is decidedly against Indians. For stealing a bag of groceries or a worthless piece of harness they are sent to prison 1 to 14 years. Bill was released in 1933. He was denied parole again and again.

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(Bill Muldoon)

Bill Muldoon is a full blooded Indian born on the Piute reservation near Pyramid Lake in northern Nevada. The Piutes originally were a tribe of warriors and hunters. When General Fremont and his starving followers reached here in the dead of winter in the early 1800s they were fed and nursed back to vigor and health by the Piutes. In return the waves of succeeding Whites slaughtered them, confiscated their lands, and left them pauperized here on barren lands. I shall not go into the infamy. Except to say that it continues. Bill was born in 1896.

He attended the Indian school established by the United States Government and received the elementary education given at those institutions which in most cases is worse than none. Therefore by the time Bill left school he held the white man in utter contempt. He learned how to read and write and unlike most of the teachers in Indian Schools he learned how to think. At any rate he spurned his share of funds from Pine nuts which are allocated by the Government among the Indians and sometimes reach the startling sum of \$50.00 a year. Bill left the reservation and came to Reno and got himself a job in a garage washing cars. Due to the pressures of race prejudice he had a difficult time but he was interested in motors, had a mechanical bent and in a few years was repairing cars. He went to the Reno library and studied all the books on mechanics he could lay his hands on. As a result there is not a better mechanic in all of Nevada today than Bill Muldoon.

He saved his money and he bought a car. He kept in touch with the old folks at Pyramid Lake and visited them frequently. But because of the color of his skin he was treated more or less with contempt in Reno and everywhere the white mans civilization predominated. And he saw also the only way out of this intolerable situation was the possession of a great amount of money. His contacts made this possible. Reno has always been a crooks paradise. It has many narcotic addicts among the gambling fraternity. So soon Bill was engaged in the narcotic traffic and was making plenty of money. After opium is smoked the residue is called "Yenshee". Yenshee is very cheap but is quite as effective as opium. According to Bill nearly every man woman and child on the Indian Reservations of Nevada is a Yenshee addict. And so Bill had plenty of customers. He supplied the Piutes, the Shoshones and the Washoes. As a blind he opened a general store. He was suspected by the Federal narcotic agents but he was never caught. He would leave Reno to obtain a supply in San Francisco or Sacramento. When the supply was small in Sacramento he came to San Francisco. He established connections with the Chinese distributors in both places. At a certain spot on a certain street previously agreed upon he would drive by slowly. The contraband would be tossed into his car and off he would speed with no chance of being caught. The Chinese could be trusted to carry out an agreement. Therefore he dealt with them only. White dealers walked off with the money and frequently failed to deliver the goods. Also they diluted morphine with powdered sugar. So he respected the Chinese and they respected him.

At the State line on the Auburn Truckee highway the Federal narcotic agents would be waiting for him. They had seen him leave. But he never returned that way. He knew a secret pass in the mountains they knew nothing about. So they were never able to catch him. And as usual after being foiled time and time again these narcotic agents decided to work a frameup. No large dealer in narcotics has ever been jailed in any other way. So the agents in the course of time placed some morphine in Bills store, raided it and found it there. He was arrested and charged with violation of the Federal Narcotics laws and thrown in jail. However, Bill had money. So he hired the best lawyer in Reno. The Federal Judge sitting in Nevada at that time was Judge Borquin of Montana. Judge Borquin is one of the few intelligent Federal Judges. He saw the frameup and dismissed the case. Bill was free.

Had Bill been a white man it would have ended there. But Bill was

an Indian. So the Reno Gazette and the Nevada State Journal published indignant editorials on the case denouncing Judge Borquin and wailing at the miscarriage of justice. The district attorney of Reno read the editorials and saw his chance of adding another feather to his cap. So he issued a warrant for Bill and this time Bill found himself charged with violating the State Narcotic Laws. And the ~~District~~ ^{Superior} judge had no scruples about frameups especially where they concerned Indians. So he instructed the jury and Bill was found guilty on the same evidence and with the same witnesses which were used in his trial in the Federal Court, which found him not guilty. He was given a sentence of 8 years in the Nevada State Prison.

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